

Don Gato

1. Oh, Se - nor Don Ga - to the was a cat, _____
 2. "I a - dore you!" wrote the la - dy cat, _____

On a high, red roof Don Ga - to sat. _____
 Who was fluf - fy, white, and nice and fat. _____

He went there to a read sweet - a let - ter, meow, meow, meow,
 There was not a sweet - er kit - ty, meow, meow, meow,

When the read - ing light was bet - ter, meow, meow, meow,
 In the coun - try or the cit - y meow, meow, meow,

'Twas a love note she'd for Don Ga - to! _____
 And she said she'd wed Don Ga - to! _____

3. Oh, Don Gato jumped so happily,
 He fell off the roof and broke his knee,
 Broke his ribs and all this whiskers, . . .
 And his little solar plexus, . . .
 "Ay caramba!" cried Don Gato.

4. Then the doctors all came on the run
 Just to see if something could be done,
 And they held a consultation, . . .
 About how to save their patient . . .
 How to save Senor Don Gato!

5. But in spite of ev'rything they tried,
 Poor Senor Don Gato up and died,
 Oh, it wasn't very merry, . . .
 Going to the cemetery, . . .
 For the ending of Don Gato!

6. When the funeral passed the market square,
 Such a smell of fish was in the air,
 Though his burial was slated, . . .
 He became re-animated! . . .
 He came back to life, Don Gato!

SINGING

This song is a ballad, which is a song with many verses that tells a story. Ballads are most effective when the story is told not only with words, but also by using the tone and color of the voice itself to express ideas and feelings. Within healthy limits and while still singing on pitch, experiment with singing the song using different vocal qualities to convey the meaning of the story. Don't be afraid to ham it up!

PLAYING

Experiment with adding instrumental parts that reflect the style of the song and the story. Which instruments fit and which don't? Help the students discover that Latin percussion instruments (guiro, castanets, claves, maracas, etc.) enhance the Latin feeling of the piece while other instruments, such as the gong, may be effective for special effects, but do not help immerse the listener in the Latin feel of the piece. Discuss how instrument choice affects the expressiveness of a piece.

CREATING

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group silently dramatize a verse of the song while the rest of the class sings. Encourage the students to experiment with singing styles that reflect the dramatizations—while still singing on pitch and without resorting to harmful vocal techniques.

LISTENING

Without indicating the origin of the music, have students listen to recordings of other music that is either from a particular culture or that seeks to portray a particular culture. Have them tell you what culture they think the music represents either with a verbal response or by the way they move their bodies. Then discuss what sounds they heard in the music itself that influenced their response. Discuss what sounds they might use with this or other pieces to convey the feeling of a particular culture to their listeners.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION (Language Arts)

Read the lyrics of the song as if reading a story. Point out that a ballad is story told in verse and usually set to music. Singing ballads was one way of providing entertainment and spreading news in cultures with no television or radios. Find books or stories that are written as ballads (with or without music) and practice telling or singing them in a lyrical way. If the ballad does not already have music with it, try making up your own and singing it as if you were sitting around a campfire on the trail or were in a remote village anxious to hear a new song or story from a traveling minstrel.